

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. 1. A menu emulation method comprising:
 2. encoding a form-submit element with a menu-item description and an associated graphical icon denoting a selectable menu;
 4. disposing said encoded form-submit element in network distributable markup and
 5. distributing said markup to a content browser; and,
 6. responsive to a selection of one of said menu-item description and said graphical icon, further distributing over said network to said content browser a graphical menu-structure encoded in at least one additional form-submit element.
2. 2. The menu emulation method of claim 1, wherein said encoding step comprises:
 3. embedding in a markup representation of said form-submit element, a network reference to a server configured to produce enhanced graphical menu images, said
 4. network reference comprising a textual menu-item description and a menu type.
3. 3. The menu emulation method of claim 1, wherein said disposing step comprises:
 2. embedding said encoded form-submit element in network distributable markup
 3. defining a table cell in a table;
 4. formatting said table cell with a background color matching the background colors of other table cells in said table; and,
 6. distributing said markup, upon request, to a content browser.

1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein said step of further distributing a graphical menu-
2 structure comprises:

3 responsive to a selection of said encoded form-submit element embedded in said
4 table cell, assembling a graphical menu-structure encoded in at least one additional
5 form-submit element;

6 replacing said encoded form-submit element embedded in said table cell with
7 said graphical menu-structure; and,

8 formatting said table cell with a background color which differs from the
9 background colors of other table cells in said table.

1 5. The menu emulation method of claim 1, wherein said disposing step comprises:

2 embedding said encoded form-submit element in network distributable markup
3 defining a table cell in a table row in a table;

4 further embedding other encoded form-submit elements in other table cells in
5 said table row; and,

6 formatting each said table cell with a first background color.

1 6. The menu emulation method of claim 1, wherein said further distributing step
2 comprises:

3 detecting a selection of one of said encoded form-submit elements in said row;

4 responsive to said detection, assembling a graphical menu-structure encoded in
5 at least one additional form-submit element;

6 replacing said one of said encoded form-submit elements with said graphical
7 menu-structure; and,

8 formatting a table cell containing said graphical menu-structure with a
9 background color which differs from the background colors of said other table cells in
10 said table row.

1 7. The method of claim 4, wherein said assembling step comprises generating a
2 graphical display of a menu-structure, said display comprising at least one of a textual
3 menu action, a graphically selectable menu action, and a nested menu structure.

4 8. The method of claim 6, further comprising:
5 preserving state information for each encoded form-submit element; and,
6 upon detecting a selection of one of said encoded form-submit elements,
7 identifying graphical menu-structures in said markup from said state information, and
8 removing said graphical menu-structures from said markup except for a graphical
9 menu-structure assembled for said selected encoded form-submit element.

1 9. A menu emulation method comprising:
2 serving markup to a plurality of content browsers, said markup comprising at
3 least one form-based input element encapsulating a reference to a composite image of
4 menu text and a graphical icon, said icon denoting a selectable menu;
5 receiving an indication from at least one of said content browsers that said form-
6 based input element has been selected; and,

7 responsive to said receipt of said indication, further serving to said at least
8 content browser a graphical image of a menu structure, said graphical image
9 comprising at least one form-based input element encapsulating a reference to a
10 composite image of menu text and a graphical icon, said icon denoting at least one of a
11 menu action and a selectable menu.

1 10. A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program for
2 performing menu emulation, said computer program comprising a routine set of
3 instructions for causing the machine to perform the steps of:
4 serving markup to a plurality of content browsers, said markup comprising at
5 least one form-based input element encapsulating a reference to a composite image of
6 menu text and a graphical icon, said icon denoting a selectable menu;
7 receiving an indication from at least one of said content browsers that said form-
8 based input element has been selected; and,
9 responsive to said receipt of said indication, further serving to said at least
10 content browser a graphical image of a menu structure, said graphical image
11 comprising at least one form-based input element encapsulating a reference to a
12 composite image of menu text and a graphical icon, said icon denoting at least one of a
13 menu action and a selectable menu.

1 11. A network distributable emulated menu comprising:
2 a plurality of composite images, each said image comprising menu text and a
3 graphical icon, said icon denoting a selectable menu;

4 a plurality of selectable form-based input elements, each said element
5 encapsulating one of said composite images; and,
6 a graphical image of a menu structure, said graphical image comprising at least
7 one form-based input element encapsulating a reference to a composite image of menu
8 text and a graphical icon, said icon denoting at least one of a menu action and a
9 selectable menu.

12. The emulated menu of claim 11, further comprising a plurality of table cells, each
cell containing one of said selectable form-based input elements.

13. The emulated menu of claim 11, wherein said menu structure comprises at least one of a textual menu action, a graphically selectable menu action, and a nested menu structure.